

Remarks Following Discussions With Prime Minister Ferenc Gyurcsany of Hungary and an Exchange With Reporters

October 7, 2005

President Bush. We'll have opening statements, and we'll both take questions—two a side.

Mr. Prime Minister, welcome. I thank you for coming. We have just had a very lengthy discussion, and it should be a lengthy discussion. After all, we're friends and allies. I appreciate very much your understanding of the importance of democracy and freedom. I want to thank you for your leadership.

I am pleased with the economic progress that you've made. I say "pleased" because there is a lot of U.S. investment in Hungary. People have chosen to invest in Hungary because it's a place that honors rule of law. It's got reasonable taxation and reasonable regulation. I'm not surprised that the country has got a good economic environment. After all, the Prime Minister is somebody who understands economics and business. And so congratulations on setting an environment that people—in which people feel comfortable about investing.

We talked about the world. And again, I want to thank Hungary for its contributions in Afghanistan and Iraq.

The Prime Minister also brought up some issues of concern to the people of Hungary, one of which, of course, is visa policy. He understands that his job, when talking to the President, is to—is to say, "The people of my country"—which he did—"are concerned about the visa policy." And I told him that we recognize that we need to move forward and work with our friend. We have set up a roadmap, a way forward, to make sure our visa policy works for the people of Hungary.

Mr. Prime Minister, thank you for bringing up the issue. I assured him that I will continue to work with Secretary Rice to put a plan in place, to cooperate with Hungary, and to have a plan in place that is a fair and reasonable plan for the people of Hungary.

All in all, I found it to be a great visit. The visit, by the way, started yesterday when his good wife and my wife visit—had a—had

a strong visit. She laid the groundwork for this diplomacy that's being conducted today, and she did a great job. So welcome to you and your wife, here to America.

Prime Minister Gyurcsany. Mr. President, ladies and gentlemen, let me use my mother tongue, mainly because I would like all the Hungarian people understand what I'm saying here in the Oval Office. Please understand, just—Hungarian sometimes is very hard.

[At this point, the Prime Minister continued his remarks in Hungarian, and they were translated by an interpreter.]

So we came to the United States to strengthen our friendship and our ally. We came to emphasize once again that we understand that we have joint matters, joint affairs in this world to do. And maybe the two countries have different possibilities, but we have equal responsibility to sustain stability and peace in the world and to represent the case of democracy.

Now in these matters, the United States and Hungary are not just allies but are also good, understanding friends. We did reinforce our former agreement about our presence in Iraq and Afghanistan. We did not introduce any new elements to that field.

I think we also would like to see that besides security elements the cooperation, the partnership between the United States and Hungary are more and more about business and good relations. And also, American investors, the largest American businesses, have played a key role in making sure that Hungary has reached a record high in terms of—*[inaudible]*—capital influx over the past year.

Many similarities and some differences between our two countries, but there is one thing where we are completely identical in our ideas. Both President Bush and myself want to make sure that our people in the—in the United States and in Hungary live in security, that they have peaceful lives, prosperity, democracy. And these are the key issues, really.

Many thanks, Mr. President.

President Bush. Thank you. Thanks for coming. A couple of questions.

Jennifer [Jennifer Loven, Associated Press].

Associate Justice-Designate Harriet Miers

Q. Thank you, sir. The criticism, from some conservatives, of Harriet Miers is continuing and getting rather sharp, as you know. Are you willing to rule out ever letting her nomination be withdrawn?

President Bush. Harriet Miers is an extraordinary nominee. She is a very bright woman. She is a pioneer in the law in Texas. In other words, she was the first woman hire of her firm, first partner of the firm. She's the first head of the Texas Bar Association. I mean, she has got a record of accomplishment that is extraordinary, in my judgment. She is a woman of deep character and strength. She is—she didn't come from the bench, but so did—you know, a lot of other people didn't come from the bench when they were named for the Supreme Court. I would ask people to look at Byron White, for example, or Judge Rehnquist himself.

And I'm confident she's going to be a Supreme Court Judge who will not legislate from the bench and will strictly interpret the Constitution. I am incredibly proud of my friend being willing to take on this task. She's going to be a great judge.

Q. So are you ruling it out, any withdrawal?

President Bush. No, she is going to be on the bench. She'll be confirmed. And when she's on the bench, people will see a fantastic woman who is honest, open, humble, and capable of being a great Supreme Court Judge.

Visa Issue

Q. Have you set a deadline for the visa issue to be solved?

Prime Minister Gyurcsany. We agreed on a roadmap which makes sure that Hungarian people can really perceive that it's easier and more equitable to have access to American visas. I could feel that Mr. President has a very clear understanding about why this is important for Hungarians. And I was completely sure that we will achieve the fastest possible progress which is allowed by legislative background and laws here in the United States.

President Bush. Good answer. Steve [Steve Holland, Reuters].

Terrorist Threat Against New York City Subway

Q. How significant was the threat against New York yesterday, and did New York overreact?

President Bush. I'm getting a little older, Steve, I can't hear you. [Laughter]

Q. Sorry. Did New York City overreact to the threat yesterday? And how significant was that threat, and are there any suspects?

President Bush. Well, our job is to gather intelligence and pass them on to local authorities. And they make the judgments necessary to respond. The level of cooperation between the Federal Government and the local government is getting better and better. And part of that level of cooperation is the ability to pass information on. And we did, and they responded.

Q. So you don't think they overreacted?

President Bush. I think they took the information that we gave and made the judgments they thought were necessary. And the American people have got to know that, one, that we're collecting information and sharing it with local authorities on a timely basis, and that's important.

50th Anniversary of the 1956 Hungarian Revolution

Q. I would like to raise the question to President Bush as well, if, as far as you know, you've got an invitation from the Hungarian Government for next year for the 50th anniversary of the 1956 revolution? So would you accept this invitation?

Prime Minister Gyurcsany. We certainly spoke about the invitation; 1956 is a huge achievement for the Hungarian nation. And the impact of that goes far beyond the borders of Hungary. We certainly want to make sure that our friends, friends of democracy are there next year in Hungary. Therefore, I extended an invitation to the President for next year to Hungary, and I'm completely certain that he would come. [Laughter]

President Bush. Well, he did extend the invitation, and I appreciate the invitation, because 1956 means a lot to a lot of Americans. A lot of Americans came from Hungary to

live here after the '56 incidents. They can trace their history to our country because of those—of what took place in Hungary. Plus, a lot of Americans followed the incidents in 1956 and appreciated and respected the courage of folks who were willing to stand up for freedom and liberty.

See, 1956 says to us, there are key moments in history when ordinary citizens are willing to defend the right for all to be free. And so it's an important event. I told the Prime Minister, I'm not my own scheduler. I will pass the word on how important this event is, and I will look very carefully at the invitation.

Listen, thank you all. Mr. Prime Minister, thanks for coming. Appreciate it.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:50 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, the President referred to Klara Dobrev, wife of Prime Minister Gyurcsany. Prime Minister Gyurcsany spoke in Hungarian, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter.

Remarks at a Reception Honoring Hispanic Heritage Month

October 7, 2005

The President. *Gracias, y bienvenidos a la Casa Blanca.* Thank you for coming. It is such an honor to have you here to help celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month. It's a month in which we can recognize the contributions that Hispanic Americans make to our great land.

The Hispanic community is known for its strong commitment to the *familia y fe* and a great love of our country. Here's what I think: I think Hispanic Americans—I don't think, I know Hispanic Americans have helped build our country and shape our culture, and the United States is better off because of the Hispanic influence.

I appreciate so very much that members of my administration have come. I told them they could take a little time off from work. [Laughter] Carlos Gutierrez, the Secretary of Commerce, and his wife, Edi, thank you for coming. *El Juez*, the Attorney General of the United States, Al Gonzales, and his wife, Becky. Hector Barreto, head of the SBA. Newly confirmed as the Assistant Secretary

of Commerce, Israel Hernandez. Congratulations.

We've got Members of the Congress who are here. Wayne Allard, thank you for coming. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, Marilyn Musgrave, Henry Cuellar, Luis Fortuno, thank you all for being here. It's such an honor you're here. Hans Hertell, an Ambassador to the Dominican Republic, members of the diplomatic corps, thank you all for coming. It's nice of you to join us today. *Los Embajadores.*

It is good to see my friend, Emilio Estefan. Thank you for coming, Emilio. Hector Gomez, Major League Soccer player from the L.A. Galaxy is with us. Christian Gomez, Major League Soccer player from D.C. United. Strong right-hander from the Washington Nats, Esteban Loaiza. *Gracias*, thank you all for coming. We're proud you're here. I appreciate members of the Latino organizations who are here today. Thank you for working on behalf of Latino citizens around the country.

As we celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month, we honor the promise of freedom and opportunity that brought either you or your ancestors to America. That's what we're honoring. We're honoring the fact that this is a free society, and we recognize our responsibility to ensure that everyone in this country has a chance to realize their God-given talents and to realize their dreams. That's what America is all about. America must always be a land of dreamers, and people will have a chance to realize those dreams.

The 21st century opportunity begins with a quality education. You can't be a land of dreams if you don't educate your kids. One of my biggest concerns was that sometimes in our public schools, if your parents didn't speak English, for example, you just got shuffled through. And that was unacceptable to me and unacceptable to many Members of the United States Congress.

I came together for the—with the Congress to challenge what I've called the soft bigotry of low expectations, to encourage school systems all around America to raise standards and raise the bar and measure to make sure that every child is learning to read and write and add and subtract. And if not, if they find they're not learning to read and